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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

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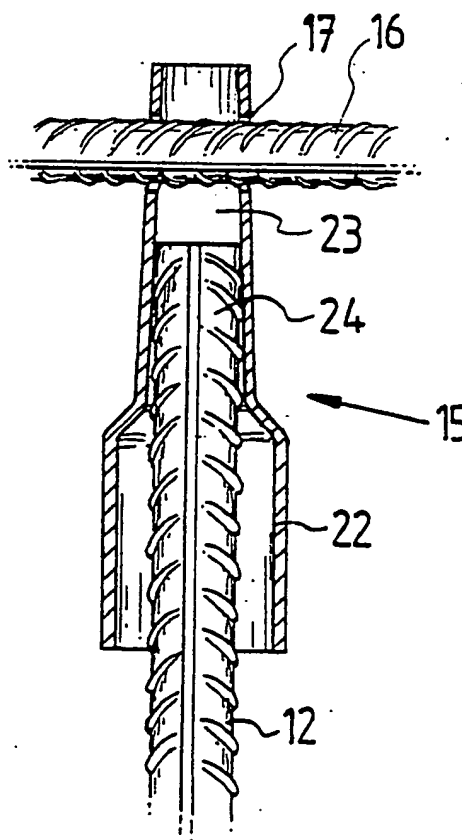
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Published
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(54) Title: CONSTRUCTION SITE SAFETY

(57) Abstract

A reinforcement bar end cap (15) comprising a hollow body which can be placed over the free end of an exposed reinforcing bar (12), the body having an impact member receiving means (17) so that an impact member (16) can be adjustably located in the receiving means adjacent the free end of the bar, in order for the impact member to take the brunt of impact from a falling person, so as to prevent impalement of a person on the bar.



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"CONSTRUCTION SITE SAFETY"

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

THIS INVENTION relates to construction site safety and in particular to a method and apparatus for reducing the risk of impalement of a person falling on exposed reinforcing steel.

BACKGROUND ART

Reinforced concrete structures are usually made in a number of stages including construction of the form work, tying the steel and pouring the concrete. In order to maintain a structural link between say, foundations and walls or floors, it is usual to "tie" reinforcing bars between the structures so that the bars are common to both structures. This invariably results in the bars being exposed for a period of time which presents an occupational hazard to workers who may fall on the bars and suffers serious injury including impalement.

OUTLINE OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to reduce the risk of impalement by providing in one aspect, a method for reducing the risk of impalement of a person falling on exposed reinforcing steel, the method including capping the free ends of exposed reinforcing bars with at least one impact member, the or each impact member being adjustably locatable relative to the respective free ends of the respective bars so that the or each impact member takes the brunt of impact from the falling person to prevent impalement of the person on the bar.

In another aspect, the invention resides in a partially completed concrete construction including a plurality of exposed reinforcing bars, each bar having a free end, an end cap removably located over each free end and an impact member extending in adjustable relationship from each end cap so as to take the brunt of impact of a falling person and thereby prevent impalement of a person on any of the bars.

In still a further aspect, the invention resides in a reinforcement bar end cap when used or sold or offered for sale or hired or offered for hire, for the purpose of reducing the risk of impalement of a person falling on exposed reinforcing steel, the end cap comprising a hollow body which can be placed over the free end of an exposed reinforcing bar, the body having an impact member receiving means so that an impact member can be adjustably located in the receiving means adjacent the free end of the bar, in order for the impact member to take the brunt of impact from a falling person, so as to prevent impalement of a person on the bar.

The end cap can be of any desired shape and is preferably arranged so that the free end of the reinforcing bar is aligned with or in contact with the impact member so that when a person falls upon the impact member, the impact member engages with the bar so that the responsive force of the bar is delivered directly or indirectly to the impact member. Advantageously, the hollow body includes a self-centering means in order to centre the bar relative to the impact member. The self-centering means if preferably a tapered internal neck adapted to "wedge fit" over the free end of the reinforcing bar. Advantageously, the tapered internal neck is tapered sufficiently so that an end cap can cater for a number of different diameter bars. Alternatively, the end cap can include centering flanges, shoulders or stops or any other suitable means for locating the free end of the reinforcing bar in a predetermined attitude relative to the impact member.

The end cap preferably includes an upper surface free of any projecting portions which, in use, is likely to increase the risk of puncture of the eye of a person falling on the end cap. Advantageously, the upper surface is generally convex presenting an upwardly curved or domed surface.

The impact member receiving means can be a through

hole or a slot of any suitable cross-sectional which allows for adjustable movement of the impact member relative to the cap. Advantageously, the hole or slot is preferably a transverse hole or slot relative to the longitudinal axis of the reinforcing bar so that the impact member and the end cap form a generally T-shaped structure in cross-section. Where a slot is employed, it is preferable that the slot is so sized as to allow insertion of the impact member into the slot using a hand insertable clip action which causes resilient movement of the slot to clip the impact member in place. The slot can be located anywhere on the cap but is preferably located in an upper surface. The impact bar receiving means can be keyed to the shape of the impact member so that, in use, the reinforcing bar is automatically located in a predetermined position relative to the impact member.

The impact member can be of any shape or configuration so as to distribute impact over a larger area than would be the case for the single end cap or for the exposed reinforcing bar. Preferably however, the impact member comprises a removable rigid rod or bar along which the cap can slide to a predetermined position. In this way, a plurality of caps can be located on a single impact bar in order to cap a plurality of spaced exposed reinforcing bars.

The partially completed concrete construction can represent any stage of construction where injuries may occur. For example, the construction can be at the stage of form work prior to pouring, where reinforcing is tied thereby exposing the free ends of reinforcing bars in a situation where a person could be injured.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order that the invention can be more readily understood and be put into practical effect, reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings and wherein:-

Figures 1 and 2 are perspective views illustrating

concrete constructions employing the method of the present invention;

Figures 3 and 4 are typical examples of the application of the present invention to single reinforcing bars;

Figure 5 is a cross-sectional view through a reinforcement bar end cap of the type illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 showing the relationship between the reinforcement bar and an impact member;

Figure 6 is a perspective view illustrating how the end caps of Figures 1 and 2 can be stacked;

Figure 7 is a perspective view illustrating an alternative end cap suitable for use in the method of the present invention;

Figures 8, 9 and 10 are respective plan, side and inverted plan views illustrating a preferred end cap according to the present invention;

Figure 11 is a perspective view from below of the end cap Figures 8 to 10;

Figure 12 is a perspective view from above of the end cap illustrated in Figures 8 to 11;

Figure 13 is a side view illustrating a further embodiment of a cap according to the present invention;

Figures 14 and 15 are perspective views from above and below respectively illustrating a further embodiment of the present invention; and

Figures 16 and 17 are sectional views illustrating more detail the embodiment of Figures 14 and 15.

METHOD OF PERFORMANCE

Referring to the drawings and initially to Figures 1 and 2 which illustrate concrete constructions 10 and 11 respectively. The construction 10 of Figure 1 is prior to pouring concrete about reinforcement bars 12 and includes form work in the form of plywood boxing 13 whereas in Figure 2, the construction 11 represents a concrete construction after the concrete has been poured and the

form work has been removed to reveal a block 14 of concrete with protruding bars 12.

It will be appreciated that without the present invention the bars 12 would normally be exposed and should
5 a person fall upon the exposed bars 12, the person would be impaled upon the bars 12.

As the method of the present invention has been employed in each of Figures 1 and 2, each of the exposed reinforcing bars has been capped using removable
10 reinforcement end caps 15 which in the illustrated embodiment are bridged by impact members in the form of horizontal reinforcing bars 16 which pass through holes 17 in the end caps 15. The free ends of the bars 16 can be turned over or otherwise bent to improve safety.

15 The end caps 15 are free to slide along the bars 16 through the holes 17 so that they can be located at any appropriate spacing suitable to accommodate the spacing between the upstanding reinforcement bars 12. Thus, the system has complete adjustability to suit varying
20 conditions.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate application of the present invention to a plurality of spaced reinforcement bars 12 whereas Figures 3 and 4 illustrate typical arrangements
25 suitable for single reinforcement bars 12. Like numerals have been used to illustrate like features. The end cap illustrated in Figure 3 is the same end cap as is illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. However, the impact member in this case is a curved length of bar 18 which can be completely removed from the end cap 15 through the hole 17.

30 In the case of Figure 4, the end cap 19 includes an additional through hole 20 and the impact member is in the form of a rectangular link 21 and due to the resilience in the link 21 and the resilience in the end cap 19, which in this case is made from plastics material, the free ends of
35 the link 21 can be "clipped" in and out of the through hole 20 in order for the end cap 19 to be removed from the link

21. The long side of the link 21 in this embodiment is approximately 30cm in order to distribute the impact of a falling person over a relatively large area.

Referring to Figure 5, there is illustrated the relationship between an upstanding reinforcement bar 12 and a typical impact member 16 for an end cap 15 of the type illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. As can be seen, the end cap includes a base 22 and a tapered internal neck 23 so that the free end 24 of the bar 12 wedges against the internal neck 23 of the cap 15. This serves as a self-centering feature so that the free end of the bar 12 is aligned with the bar 16. In this way, the force of a person falling upon the impact member 16 will be delivered directly on to the free end of the bar 12. This therefore, prevents the free end of the bar 12 from accidentally sliding beyond the impact bar 16 and impaling the falling person. As can be seen, the taper on the internal neck of the cap 15 can range over the length of the neck from between 2mm to 5mm depending on the degree of taper and accordingly, a cap can be conveniently suited to a range of bar diameters over approximately a 5mm range.

It is therefore envisaged, that three cap sizes be applicable to general application of the present invention to the standard range of reinforcement bars that are available. For example, a cap having base diameter of 16mm inside diameter and tapering to an inside diameter of 5mm would be suitable for 6mm, 10mm and 12mm outside diameter bars, while a cap having a 24mm inside diameter tapering to a 12mm inside diameter would be suitable for 16mm and 20mm outside diameter bars. For larger bar sizes having outside diameters ranging from 24mm to 36mm, a cap having an inside diameter of 39mm and tapering to an inside diameter of 23mm would be suitable.

The caps are suitably designed so that they are stackable for easy transport and as can be seen in Figure 6, it is preferable that caps be designed to stack fairly

securely together and due to the tapered internal neck, this is possible. It is advantageous that the exterior of the cap tapers to a certain degree as well so that the caps themselves can wedge into a stacked arrangement as illustrated in Figure 6 so that they can be carried around a construction site as a fairly secure length of caps.

While the caps illustrated in Figures 1 through 6 have a self-centering tapered internal neck, there are of course other arrangements which can suitably locate the impact member relative to the free end of an exposed reinforcement bar when the cap is located in place. One example is illustrated in Figure 7 wherein in this embodiment, the end cap 25 includes internal centering flanges 26 which taper toward the end 27 of the cap 25 so that again, the reinforcement bar 12 can wedge in position centrally below the impact member.

Referring to Figures 8 to 13, additional embodiments are illustrated, there is illustrated a reinforcement bar end cap 28 having a hollow stem 29 and a dome-like cap 30 over the stem 29 and a transverse through-hole 31, which is elongate in shape, is provided in the stem so that a rocking action can be employed to facilitate movement of the end cap 28 along a bar inserted through the through-hole 31. The shape of the through-hole 31 also serves to key an impact bar of predetermined cross-section into a predetermined orientation with respect to the end cap.

The through-hole 31 has a keying effect as long as it is employed with a square bar which has a width approximately equal to the width of the through-hole. Thus, the impact bar cannot be inadvertently located on its edge.

Referring to Figure 13, there is illustrated a further embodiment where the end cap 32 is shown in place on a reinforcing bar 33, the free end portion 34 of the bar being shown in phantom. An impact bar 35 is shown in position and as can be seen, the through-hole 36 and impact

bar 35 are of rectangular cross-section so that the impact bar is "keyed" so that its broadest face is presented to the free end of the bar 33.

Referring now to Figures 14 through 17, there is
5 illustrated a further embodiment of the present invention wherein an end cap 37 has a hole in the form of a transverse slot 38 having a narrow neck 39 in a dome-like cap 40 attached to a stem 41 so that a bar 42 can be forced through the slot 38 using a hand insertable clip action
10 which causes resilient movement of the cap 40 as depicted by the arrows 43 in Figure 17.

It will be appreciated that the embodiment illustrated in Figures 14 through 17 can be used in all the applications illustrated in relation to the previous
15 embodiments but has the advantage that the cap 37 need not be threaded onto the impact member from a free end thereof. In the embodiment of Figures 14 through 17, the free end 45 of the bar 44 and the bar 42 are separated by a bridging piece 45 of material which is under compression during
20 impact if a person falling on the bar 42 or on the cap 37. Under this arrangement, it is unlikely that the cap would be damaged significantly during impact. Likewise, it is unlikely that the bar 44 would pass beyond the bar 42 under the impact of a person falling upon the arrangement as
25 illustrated. In Figure 14, the bar 42 has been omitted for the purpose of illustrating the interior of the slot 38. In addition to the above features, the embodiment illustrated includes self-centering flanges 46 which are tangentially set so that bars of varying diameter can be
30 accommodated and automatically centered.

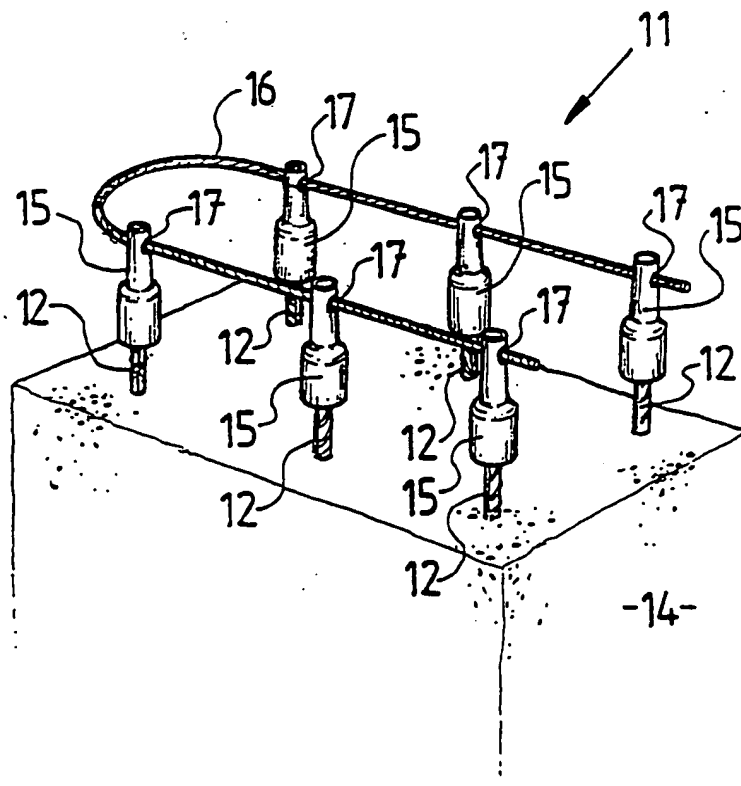
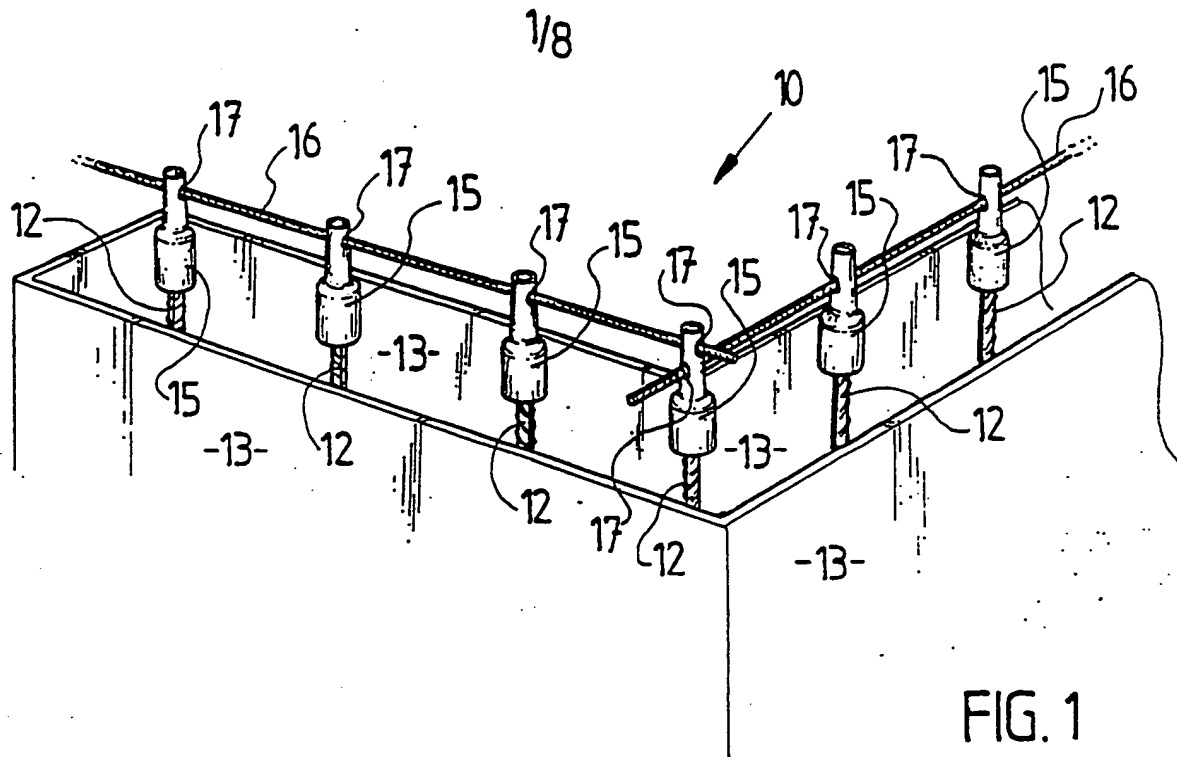
Whilst the above has been given by way of illustrative example of the present invention, there will be many other arrangements of caps and impact members and modifications thereto which will be apparent to those skilled in the art
35 without departing from the broad ambit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

CLAIMS

1. A method for reducing the risk of impalement of a person falling on exposed reinforcing steel, the method including capping the free ends of exposed reinforcing bars with at least one impact member, the or each impact member being adjustably locatable relative to the respective free ends of the respective bars so that the or each impact member takes the brunt of impact from the falling person to prevent impalement of the person on the bar.
2. A partially completed concrete construction including a plurality of exposed reinforcing bars, each bar having a free end, an end cap removably located over each free end and an impact member extending in adjustable relationship from each end cap so as to take the brunt of impact of a falling person and thereby prevent impalement of a person on any of the bars.
3. A reinforcement bar end cap comprising a hollow body which can be placed over the free end of an exposed reinforcing bar, the body having an impact member receiving means so that an impact member can be adjustably located in the receiving means adjacent the free end of the bar, in order for the impact member to take the brunt of impact from a falling person, so as to prevent impalement of a person on the bar.
4. The cap according to claim 3 wherein the hollow body includes a self-centering means in order to centre the bar relative to the impact member.
5. A reinforcement bar end cap according to claim 3 wherein the impact member receiving means comprises a through hole.
6. A reinforcement bar end cap according to claim 5 when the impact member receiving means comprises a slot so sized as to allow insertion of the impact member using a hand insertable clip action.
7. The method according to claim 1 wherein the impact member is coupled to a reinforcement bar using a

reinforcement bar end cap, the impact member being detachably secured to the end cap by a hand insertable clip action.

8. A partially completed concrete construction according to claim 2 wherein the end cap includes a slot and the impact member is secured in the slot by a hand insertable clip action.



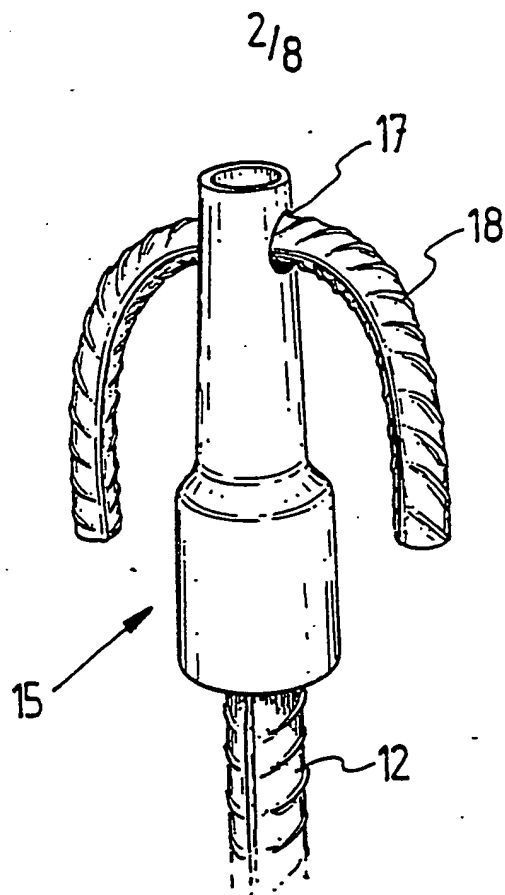


FIG. 3

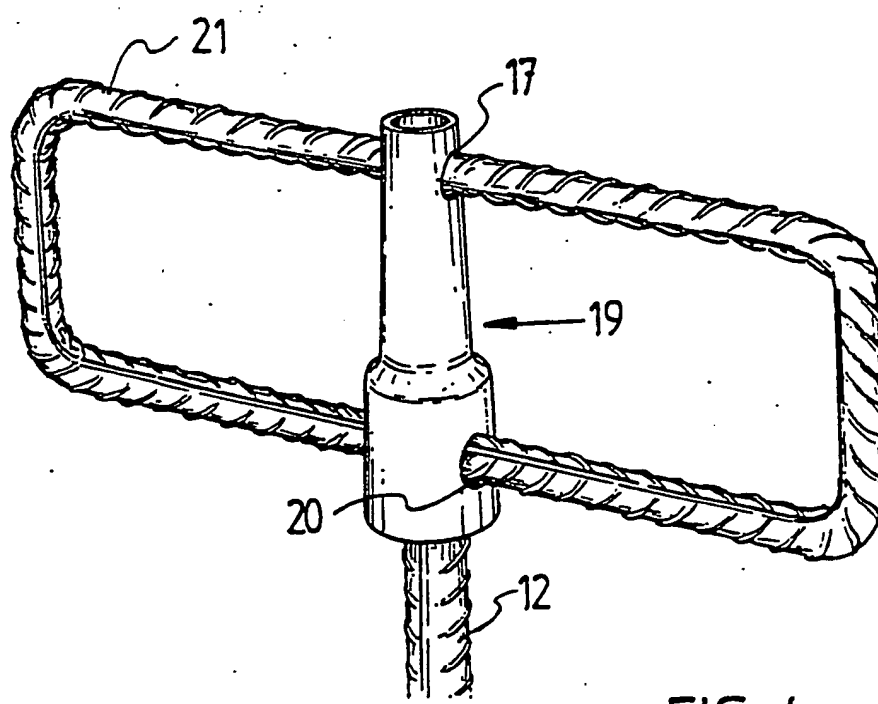
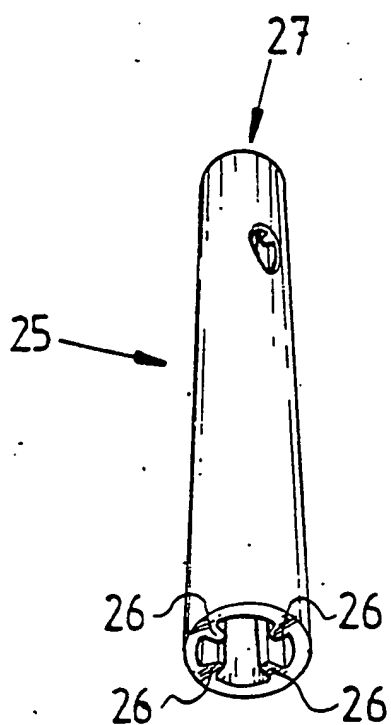
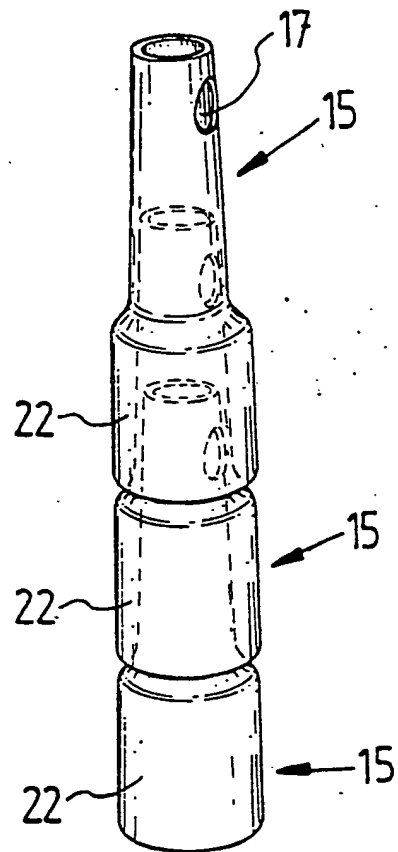
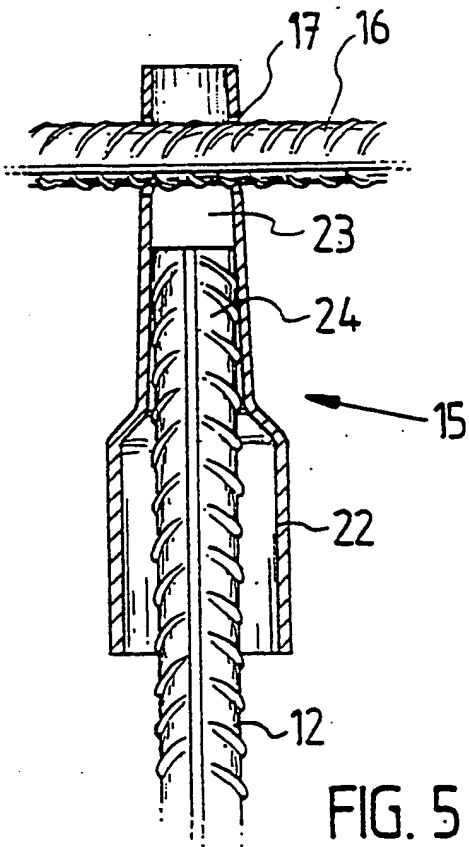


FIG. 4

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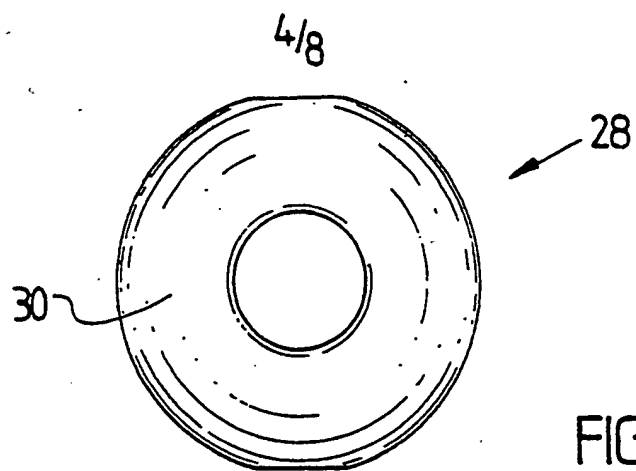


FIG. 8

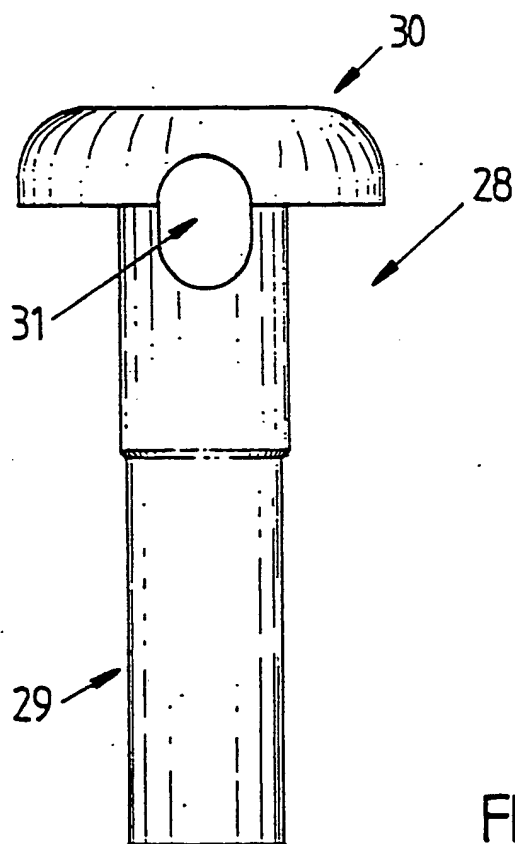


FIG. 9

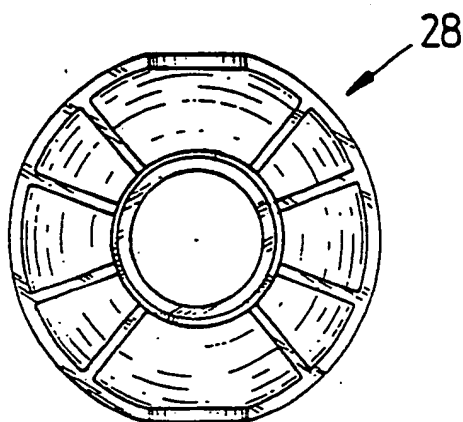
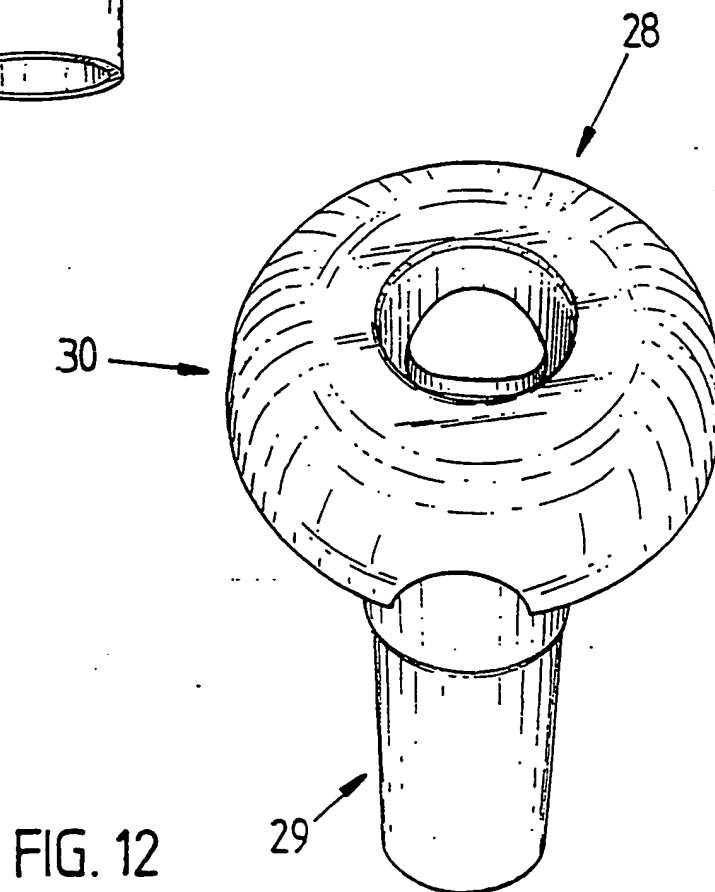
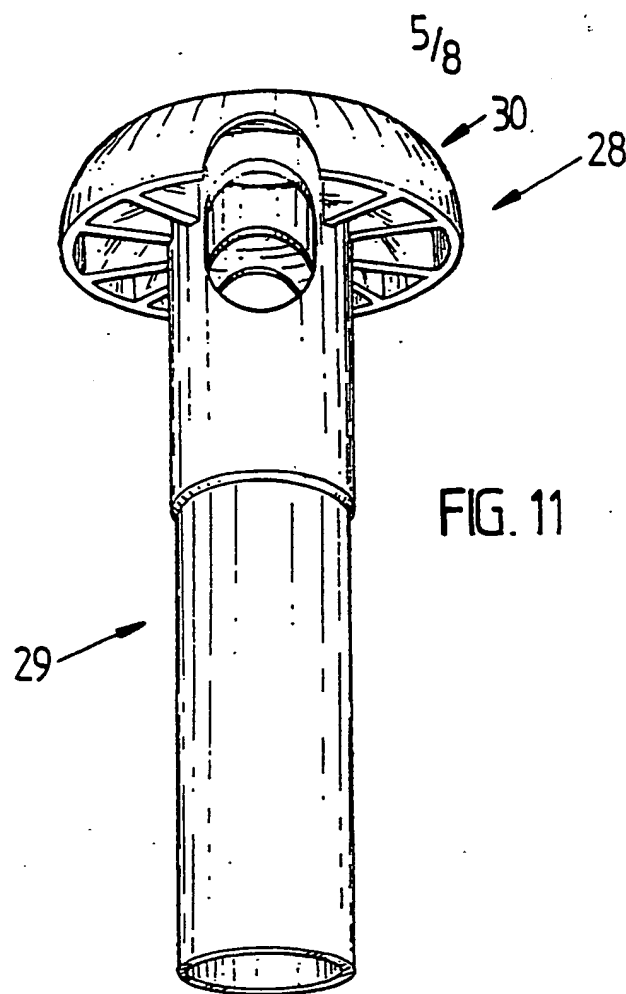


FIG. 10



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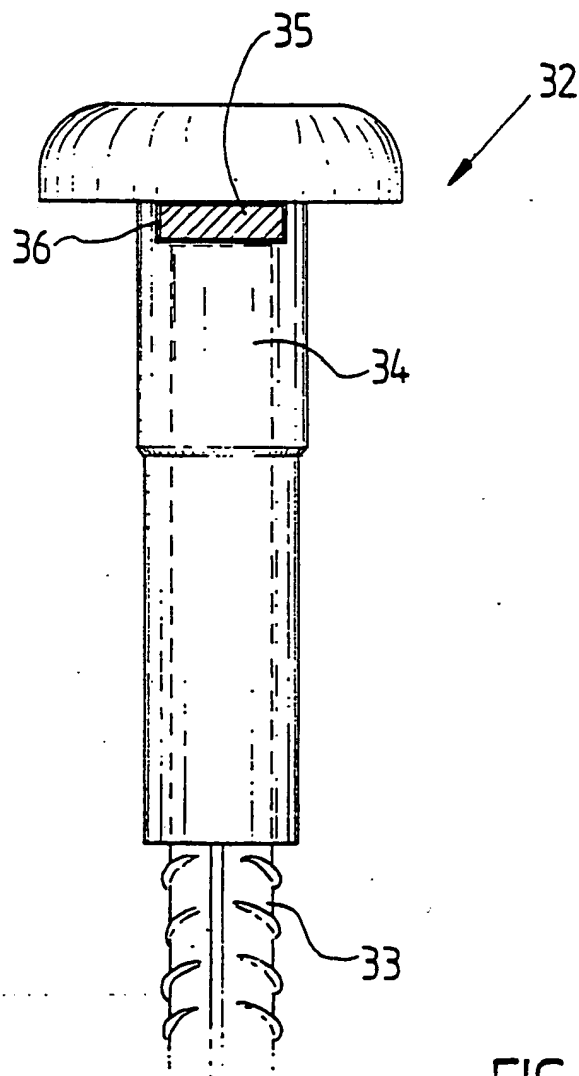


FIG. 13

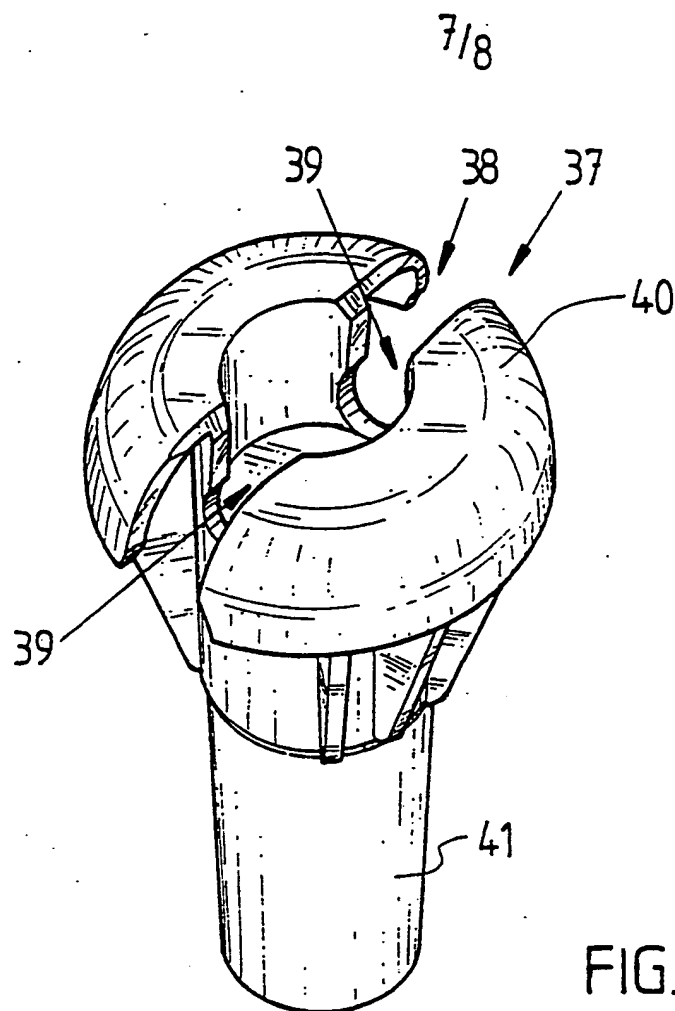


FIG. 14

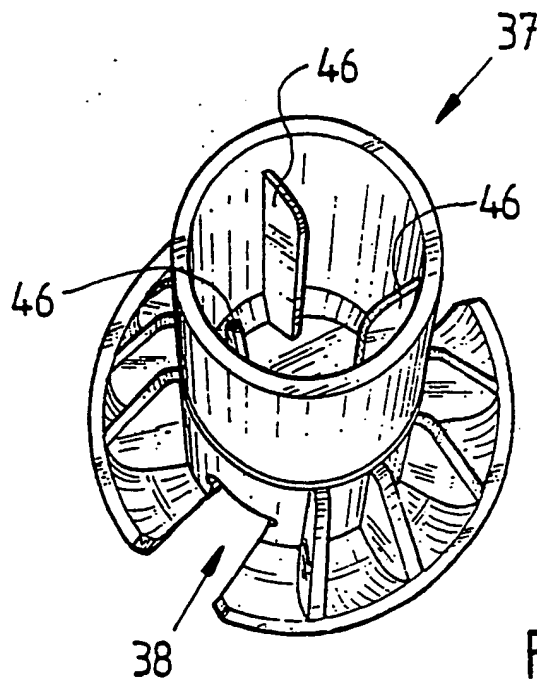
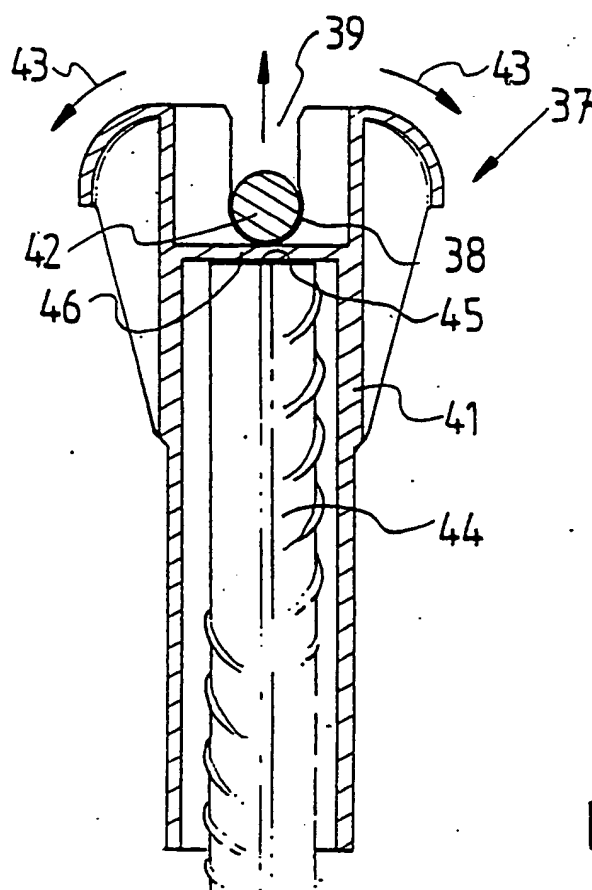
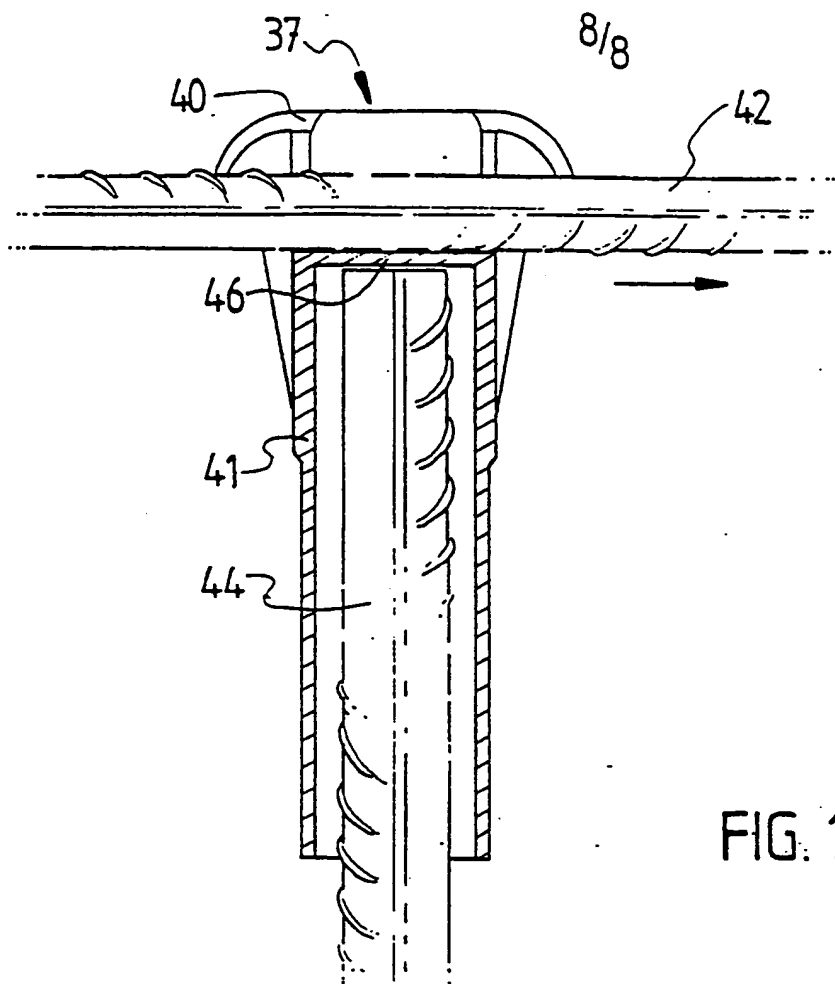


FIG. 15



SUBSTITUTE SHEET

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/AU 91/00110

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) 6

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC

Int. Cl.⁵ E04C 5/16, 5/20; E04G 21/32

II. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum Documentation Searched 7

Classification System |

Classification Symbols

IPC

E04C 5/16, 5/20; E04G 21/32

Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation
to the extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched 8

AU : IPC as above

III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT 9

Category*	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages 12	Relevant to Claim No 13
X	DE,A, 2106996 (JENTSCH) 31 August 1972 (31.08.72) See Figure	(1)
X	EP,A, 347326 (SOCIETE CIVILE "BCZMN") (See Figure 5)	(1-4,8)
X	FR,A, 2579253 (MOISAN) 26 September 1986 (26.09.86) See Figures 1 & 2	(1)
X	FR,A, 2578953 (MOISAN) 19 September 1986 (19.09.86) See Figure 5	(1)
X	FR,A, 2348406 (FREYSINET INTERNATIONAL) 10 November 1977 (10.11.77) See Figure 2	(1)
X	FR,A, 1547999 (A BERG) 29 November 1968 (29.11.68) See Figures 1 & 4	(1)
(continued)		

* Special categories of cited documents: 10

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

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"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"Z" document member of the same patent family

IV. CERTIFICATION

Date of the Actual Completion of the
International Search

11 June 1991 (11.06.91)

Date of Mailing of this International
Search Report

1 July 1991

International Searching Authority

Australian Patent Office

Signature of Authorized Officer

D.R. LUM

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM THE SECOND SHEET

X	GB,B, 963741 (A BERG) 15 July 1964 (15.07.64) See Figures 1-4	(1,2)
X	WO,A, 84/03348 (L HOTEL) 30 August 1984 (30.08.84) See Abstract & Figure 3	(1-4,8)

V. ☐ OBSERVATIONS WHERE CERTAIN CLAIMS WERE FOUND UNSEARCHABLE 1

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claim numbers ..., because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claim numbers , because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claim numbers ..., because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of PCT Rule 6.4 (a):

VI. ☐ OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION IS LACKING 2

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application as follows:

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims of the international application.
2. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims of the international application for which fees were paid, specifically claims:
3. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claim numbers:
4. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the International Searching Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by applicant's protest.
☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT ON
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/AU 91/00110

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document
Cited in Search
Report

Patent Family Members

EP 347326

FR 2632997

FR 2348406

JP 52155825

END OF ANNEX .